

A History of Indian Buddhism: From Sakyamuni to Early Mahayana.

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## CHAPTER 17

# *The Contents of Early Mahāyāna Scriptures*

### **The Earliest Mahāyāna Scriptures**

THE EARLIEST KNOWN Mahāyāna scriptures are the *Liu po-lo-mi ching* (*Śaṭpāramitā*), *P'u-sa tsang-ching* (*Bodhisattvapīṭaka*), *San-p'in ching* (*Triskandhakadharmaparyāya*), and the *Tao-chih ta-ching*.<sup>1</sup> These texts are thought to be very early because they are cited in some of the first Mahāyāna scriptures to be translated. The *Liu po-lo-mi ching* (*Śaṭpāramitā*) is quoted in such texts as Lokakṣema's 179 c.e. translation of the *Kāśyapaparivarta* (*T* 350) and Chih Ch'ien's (fl. 223–253) translation of the Larger *Sukhāvativyūhasūtra* (*T* 362). The bodhisattva is urged to chant the *Śaṭpāramitā* in these early texts.

The *P'u-sa tsang-ching* (*Bodhisattvapīṭaka*) is cited in texts such as Lokakṣema's translation of the *Kāśyapaparivarta* (*T* 350) and Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Vimaladattāpariprcchā* (*T* 338). The *San-p'in ching* (*Triskandhakadharmaparyāya*) is cited in such texts as the translation of the *Ugradattāpariprcchā* by An Hsüan and Yen Fo-t'iao (*T* 322), the *Vimaladattāpariprcchā* translated by Dharmarakṣa in 289 (*T* 338), the *Ssu-ho-mei ching* translated by Chih Ch'ien (*T* 532), and the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*. The *Tao-chih ta-ching* is cited in Chih Ch'ien's translation of the Larger *Sukhāvativyūha* (*T* 362). Since the translations by Lokakṣema, An Hsüan, and Yen Fo-t'iao were done during the reign of Emperor Ling (168–189), the Mahāyāna texts they translated are clearly early. The *Śaṭpāramitā*, *Bodhisattvapīṭaka*, and *Triskandhakadharmaparyāya* are even older, since they are quoted in these early translations.

The very earliest Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Śaṭpāramitā* are no

longer extant. Consequently, the date of their composition cannot be determined from the texts themselves. However, approximate dates can be determined indirectly. Early versions of texts such as the *Kāśyapa-parivarta* (translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema as the *I jih-mo-ni-pao ching*, T 350) were probably compiled in the first century of the common era. Since the *Ṣaṭpāramitā* was quoted in these texts, the *Ṣaṭpāramitā* and the other earliest Mahāyāna texts were probably compiled in the first century B.C.E. The *Ṣaṭpāramitā* is treated as a typical Mahāyāna *sūtra* in the *Tā-chih-tu lun* (T 1509, 25:308a and 349b, *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*). The *Ṣaṭpāramitā* apparently was an influential text. As its title implies, it probably consisted of a description of the practice of the six perfections. In the course of treating each of the six perfections equally, early Mahāyānists eventually realized that the perfection of wisdom was particularly important. Perfection of wisdom *sūtras* probably first appeared after the *Ṣaṭpāramitā* was compiled.

Although the *Bodhisattvapīṭaka* is mentioned in several early texts, its contents are not clearly known. However, the *Fu-lou-na hui* (*Pūrṇa-pariprcchā*§) in the *Tā-pao chi-ching* (T 310.17, *Mahāratnakūṭa*), translated by Kumārajīva, was originally called the *P'u-sa tsang-ching* (*Bodhisattvapīṭaka*). In Kumārajīva's translation of this text, *sūtras* called the *P'u-sa tsang-ching* and the *Ying liu po-lo-mi ching* are cited, suggesting that the text Kumārajīva used was compiled later than the earliest version of the *P'u-sa tsang-ching*. In addition, several other texts bear the title of *P'u-sa tsang-ching*, including translations by Seng-chia-p'o-lo (Saṅghabhara?) and Hsüan-tsang (T 1491 and 310.12). Hsüan-tsang's translation is twenty fascicles long; the middle thirteen fascicles contain an explanation of the six perfections. These translations were completed long after Mahāyāna Buddhism had arisen and thus cannot be used to determine the contents of the earliest version of the *P'u-sa tsang-ching*. At the same time, these later works are probably related to the early version of the *P'u-sa tsang-ching*.

A general idea of the contents of the *San-p'in ching* (*Triskandhakadharmaparyāya*) can be gained from passages in such texts as the *Fa-ching ching* (T 322, *Ugradattapariprcchā*). Confession ceremonies were a major topic of the *San-p'in ching*. According to the *Yu-chia chang-che ching* (T 323, *Ugradattapariprcchā*), the following subjects were discussed in the *San-p'in ching*: worship at the *stūpa*, confession before the Buddha of one's past wrongdoing, the cultivation of joy at another's accomplishments, the transference of one's merits to help others, and the invitation to the Buddha to the place of practice. The procedures for ceremonies to worship the Buddha six times during each twenty-four-hour day were also included.<sup>2</sup> Dharmarakṣa is credited with translating a one-fascicle work

entitled *San-p'in hui-kuo ching* (not extant), which may have been related to the *San-p'in ching*. Among extant texts, the *She-li-fu hui-kuo ching* (T 1492, *Triskandhaka*?) and the *Ta-sheng san-chü ch'an-hui ching* (T 1493, *Karmāvaraṇapratiprasrabdhisūtra*§) are probably part of the tradition that produced the *San-p'in ching* (*Triskandhakadharmaparyāya*). Further research on this group of texts is needed.

### Perfection of Wisdom (*Prajñāpāramitā*) Sūtras

The largest perfection of wisdom text is the *Ta pan-jo po-lo-mi-to ching* (T 220, *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*) translated into Chinese by Hsüan-tsang. It is six hundred fascicles long and divided into sixteen assemblies (or parts). Perfection of wisdom sūtras were not always such large works. At first a number of separate texts circulated independently. Later they were collected together to make larger works such as the one mentioned above.

The oldest sūtra in this group is the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* (T 224) translated by Lokakṣema. Since the translation was completed around 179, the original text probably dates back to the first century c.e. It belongs to the same group of texts as the *Hsiao-p'in pan-jo ching* (T 227) translated by Kumārajīva and the Sanskrit *Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines* (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā-PP*). It corresponds to the fourth and fifth assemblies in *Ta pan-jo ching* (T 220). The *Kuang-tsan pan-jo ching* translated by Dharmarakṣa (T 222) corresponds to the *Fang-kuang pan-jo ching* (T 221) translated by Mokṣala, the *Ta-p'in pan-jo ching* (T 223) translated by Kumārajīva, the Sanskrit *Perfection of Wisdom in 25,000 Lines* (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-PP*), and the second assembly in *Ta pan-jo ching* (T 220). Other well-known perfection of wisdom sūtras are the *Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Lines* (*Śatasāhasrikā-PP*, T 220.1), *Suvikrāntavikrāmapariṣecchā* (T 220.16), *Vajracchedikā* (T 220.9, 235-239), and *Adhyardhaśatikā* (T 220.10, 240-244). Among smaller, shorter works expounding perfection of wisdom doctrines, the *Heart sūtra* (*Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayasūtra*, T 249-256) is particularly well known. Sanskrit versions of all of these sūtras exist.<sup>3</sup> They have also been completely translated into Tibetan although their organization differs on certain points from the Chinese translations.

The term "*prajñāpāramitā*" means "perfection of wisdom." In the *Ta-chih-tu lun* (T 1509, *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*), the term was explained as referring to crossing the sea of *samsāra* (life and death) to the far shore of *nirvāṇa* or enlightenment. Consequently, *prajñāpāramitā* was sometimes translated as "*chih-tu*" in Chinese (literally "crossing by means of wis-

dom") as in the title of the *Ta-chih-tu lun*. The wisdom specified in *prajñāpāramitā* is the wisdom of emptiness or nonsubstantiality, through which the practitioner clings to nothing and is bound by nothing. Thus although the term "perfection" is used, it is a perfection that does not aim at completion. It is wisdom based on practice through which one is always progressing toward the ideal.

The fierce determination and power required to practice the perfection of wisdom is obtained through mental concentrations (*samādhi*). A variety of concentrations is described in Mahāyāna texts, but the most important one is the *śūraṅgama-samādhi*, a dauntless and powerful concentration that destroys all defilements. In the chapter on the Great Vehicle (*Ta-sheng p'in*) of *Ta-p'in pan-jo ching* (T 8:251a, *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-PP*\*) a list of 108 concentrations is given with the *śūraṅgama-samādhi* mentioned first. The *śūraṅgama-samādhi* was thus thought to provide the Mahāyānist with the strength to progress in his practice. This concentration is described in the *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra*. Although Lokakṣema's translation of this text has not survived, a later translation by Kumārajīva (T 642) is extant. According to that text, the *śūraṅgama* concentration is first obtained in the *dharmameghābhūmi*, the tenth of the ten stages of the bodhisattva path. The text was thus associated with the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*. Elsewhere in the *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra*, perfection of wisdom teachings, the importance of the aspiration for enlightenment, and a stage beyond which the practitioner will not backslide are explained. The *sūtra* was compiled early in the history of Mahāyāna Buddhism and is closely related to both the *Avataṃsakasūtra* (through the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*) and the perfection of wisdom literature.

The *A-ch'u fo-kuo ching* (T 313, *Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūha*\*) is also closely connected to the perfection of wisdom *sūtras*. Akṣobhya Tathāgata long ago made a number of vows, including one that he would become omniscient and never become angry at any sentient being while he practiced to attain enlightenment. Because he never allowed himself to be moved by anger he was called the Immovable (Akṣobhya) Buddha. A similar story concerning Akṣobhya Buddha is also found in the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* (T 224, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-PP*, translated by Lokakṣema), indicating that the earliest version of the *Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūha* is probably earlier than the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching*. Adherents of the perfection of wisdom *sūtras* sometimes vowed to be reborn in Akṣobhya's Buddha-land, which was called Abhirati (Land of Joy). Amitābha worship does not appear in the perfection of wisdom *sūtras* and consequently must have originated elsewhere or under different circumstances.

In the chapter on seeing Akṣobhya Buddha's land in the *Wei-mo ching* (T 474-476, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*), Vimalakīrti is said to have originally

been from Abhirati, Akṣobhya's land. The explanation of nonsubstantiality in this *sūtra* is famous, as is the discussion of nonduality, which culminates in Vimalakīrti's eloquent silence. Although the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* was not translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema, it was translated by Chih Ch'ien soon afterward. The work was thus probably compiled later than the early perfection of wisdom *sūtras* or the *A-ch'u fo-kuo ching* (*T* 313, *Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūha* #). No Sanskrit version of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* is extant, but it is quoted in such Sanskrit texts as the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, *Prasannapadā*, and *Bhāvanākrama*.<sup>4</sup>

### The *Avatamsakasūtra*

The full name of the *Avatamsakasūtra* in Sanskrit is the *Buddhāvataṃsaka mahāvaiṣṭulyasūtra* (Ch. *Ta-fang-kuang fo-hua-yen ching*, *T* nos. 278, 279, 293). The term "*vaiṣṭulya*" (P. *vedalla*) is a title given to a *sūtra* said to include profound doctrines. It is included as a category in both the ninefold and twelvefold divisions of the Buddhist scriptures. According to some Mahāyāna texts, Mahāyāna *sūtras* should be identified with the *vaiṣṭulya* category in the ninefold or twelvefold divisions of the Buddha's teachings. The central element in the title of this *sūtra* is "*Buddhāvataṃsaka*." The term "*avatamsaka*" means "a garland of flowers," indicating that all the virtues that the Buddha has accumulated by the time he attains enlightenment are like a beautiful garland of flowers that adorns him. Another title of the *sūtra*, *Gaṇḍavyūha*, probably is unconnected to the title *Buddhāvataṃsaka*. "*Vyūha*" means "ornament." The meaning of "*gaṇḍa*" is not clear, but it may mean "stem" or "stalk." According to other explanations, it may mean "miscellaneous flowers." Thus *Gaṇḍavyūha* might mean "ornament of miscellaneous or various flowers," but this interpretation is not certain. Generally, *Gaṇḍavyūha* is considered to be the original name of the "Chapter on Entering the *Dharmadhātu*" (*Ju fa-chieh p'in*, see *T* 295 for an example) that is included in the *Avatamsaka*.

The *Avatamsaka* was translated into Chinese by Buddhahadra in 421 C.E. (*T* 278). This translation, consisting of sixty fascicles and divided into thirty-four chapters, was based on a Sanskrit text that had been brought to China from Khotan by Chih Fa-ling. Thus the Sanskrit text of the *Avatamsaka* was compiled before 400, probably by 350. Later, in 699, it was translated into Chinese again by Śikṣānanda (*T* 279). This version was eighty fascicles long and divided into thirty-nine chapters. Still later a Tibetan translation divided into forty-five chapters was made. Because the Sanskrit text used in Buddhahadra's Chinese trans-

lation had been brought from Khotan, some modern scholars have argued that additions and revisions to the *sūtra* were done in Central Asia. However, the Sanskrit text upon which the Tibetan translation was based was probably brought from India, not Central Asia. The possibility of Central Asian additions to the text requires further investigation.

The *Avataṃsaka* originally was not as lengthy a text as it is today. In the *Ta-chih-tu lun* (T 1509, *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*), the *Daśabhūmika* and *Gaṇḍavyūha* are quoted. Thus, before they were incorporated into the *Avataṃsaka*, these two works must have circulated independently. Even earlier is Lokakṣema's translation, the *Tou-sha ching* (T 280), which is an early version of the *Avataṃsaka*'s chapters on the "Names of the Tathāgata" (*Ming-hao p'in*) and on "Enlightenment" (*Kuang-ming-chüeh p'in*). Chih Ch'ien's translation, the *P'u-sa pen-yeh ching* (T 281), primarily corresponds to the "Chapter on Pure Practices" (*Ching-hsing p'in*) of the *Avataṃsaka*. The early compilation of the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* is demonstrated by the descriptions of the ten stages (*daśabhūmi*) in the *Shou-leng-yen san-mei ching* (T 642, *Sūraṅgamasamādhisūtra*) and other early Mahāyāna works. The *Daśabhūmikasūtra* itself was translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa around 297 (T 285). Consequently, the *Avataṃsaka* is clearly composed of a number of individual *sūtras* that circulated independently and were later compiled into a large work. Among the earliest parts of the *Avataṃsaka* are the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, *P'u-sa pen-yeh ching*, and *Tou-sha ching*.

The *Avataṃsaka* is said to reveal the Buddha's enlightenment just as it is, that is, without shaping the contents to fit the needs of the audience. The Buddha preaches the *sūtra* while he is in the ocean-seal concentration (*sāgaramudrā-samādhi*) in which everything is clearly manifested in his mind. Because the teaching was extremely difficult to understand, *śrāvakas* such as Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana are said to have not understood the *sūtra* at all and to have acted as if they were deaf and dumb.

The realm of enlightenment described in the *sūtra* is the world of Vairocana, the Buddha of Pervasive Light. (The Buddha mentioned in later Esoteric Buddhist texts is called Mahāvairocana.) He has attained unlimited virtues, paid homage to all Buddhas, taught myriads of sentient beings, and realized supreme enlightenment. A cloud of manifested Buddhas issues from the hair follicles of Vairocana's body. He is a majestic Buddha who opens the Buddhist path to sentient beings. His wisdom is compared to the ocean (mind), which reflects light (objects) everywhere without limit.

The Buddha's enlightenment is complete in and of itself; words can-

not accurately describe it. Consequently, the Buddha's enlightenment must be explained by describing its causes, the bodhisattva practices that result in enlightenment and Buddhahood. The *Avataṃsaka* thus consists of a description of the austerities of the bodhisattva as he strives to realize enlightenment. The stages on the path to enlightenment and the wisdom realized in various stages are systematically discussed. Among the stages described are the ten abodes (*avastha?* or *vihāra?*), the ten practices to benefit others (*caryā?*), the ten stages at which the practitioner's merits are given to other sentient beings (*pariṇāmanā?*), and the ten grounds (*daśabhūmi*). The ten grounds, explained in detail in the section of the *Avataṃsaka* entitled the *Daśabhūmika*, were particularly important in demonstrating the unique qualities of the bodhisattva's practices. In this text, the last of the six perfections, the perfection of wisdom, was expanded by adding four new aspects to it—skill in means (*upāya*), vows (*prañidhāna*), strength (*bala*), and knowledge (*jñāna*)—making a new total of ten perfections. By practicing the ten perfections in order over ten stages, a person can realize supreme enlightenment. The *Shih-chu p'ī-p'o-sha lun* (T 1521), a commentary on the *Daśabhūmika* attributed to Nāgārjuna, exists in Chinese. Its discussion of how faith in Amitābha Buddha can lead to Buddhahood, a path of easy practice, has been particularly influential in East Asia.

In the sixth ground, Facing Wisdom (*abhimukhī*), the bodhisattva cultivates the perfection of wisdom and gains insight into Dependent Origination. Because true wisdom appears before him, this stage is called "facing wisdom." Included in this section of the text are the famous words "The three realms are empty and false. They are simply the products of the one-mind. The elements of the twelve links of Dependent Origination all depend on the mind" (cf. T 10:194a). According to this view, all man's experiences are formed and shaped by his cognitive faculties; and man's experiences and cognitions are all attributable to the "one-mind." The "one-mind" mentioned in this passage may be interpreted as the Tathāgatagarbha, the innately pure nature of the mind referred to in many Buddhist scriptures. Consequently, according to the *Avataṃsaka* "the mind, the Buddha, and sentient beings—these three are not different" (T 9:465c).

The teaching that the original nature of the mind is pure constitutes one of the major traditions in Mahāyāna thought. It is found in the perfection of wisdom literature as well as in such *sūtras* as the *Wei-mo ching* (T 474–476, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*), *Ta-chi ching* (T 397, *Mahāsaṃnipāta?*), *A-she-shih-wang ching* (T 626–629, *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana?*), and *Wen-shu-shih-li ching-lü ching* (T 460, *Paramārthasaṃvṛtisatyānirdeśa*). If the original nature of the mind of even an ordinary person is pure, then every-

one has the potential to realize Buddhahood. The importance of developing the aspiration to enlightenment is emphasized in the *Avatamsaka*, since this beginning step sets off the process that will result in supreme enlightenment. According to the *Avatamsaka*, "At the time of the first aspiration to enlightenment, supreme enlightenment is realized" (T 9:449c). The teaching by some Hua-yen masters that Buddhahood is realized when the practitioner has completed the ten stages of faith (Ch. *hsin-man ch'eng-fo*), the beginning stages of the Hua-yen path, is based on such passages.

The *P'u-sa pen-yeh ching* (T 281), a text that consists primarily of the "Chapter on Pure Practices" (*Ching-hsing p'in*) of the *Avatamsaka* with material added to the beginning and end, circulated as an independent text. Detailed descriptions of the practices of both lay and monastic bodhisattvas are included in it. Particularly famous is the interpretation of the formula for taking refuge in the Three Jewels. It begins "When I put my faith in the Buddha, I also vow that I shall awaken the supreme aspiration in sentient beings and help them realize the path" (T 10:447c).

In the *Ju fa-chieh p'in* (*Gaṇḍavyūha*), the indescribable realm of the Buddha's enlightenment and the practices and vows of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, which enable people to enter that fabulous realm, are discussed. These subjects are related through the story of the youth Sudhana and his travels in search of the Dharma. When Sudhana heard Mañjuśrī preach, the aspiration to realize enlightenment arose within him. To put the teachings of Samantabhadra into practice, Sudhana traveled and visited fifty-three teachers. Finally, he received Samantabhadra's teachings and realized enlightenment and the *dharmadhātu*.

Sanskrit texts of several sections of the *Avatamsaka* are extant. The *Daśabhūmika* (or *Daśabhūmiśvara*) and the *Gaṇḍavyūha* have been published. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* concludes with verses, which circulated independently at one time, concerning Samantabhadra's practices and vows. The Sanskrit text of the verses has been published as the *Bhadra-cārī-praṇidhāna-rāja*. Several sections of the chapters on the bodhisattvas Bhadrāsī and Vajradhvaja are found in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and thus are preserved in Sanskrit. The latter chapter is cited under the title *Vajradhvajasūtra*, suggesting that it circulated independently for a time.<sup>5</sup>

### The Lotus Sūtra

The Sanskrit title of the *Lotus Sūtra* is *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*. A ten-fascicle Chinese translation of the *sūtra* was completed in 286 by Dhar-



marakṣa (*T* 263). Chih Ch'ien is said to have translated the chapter on "Parables" as the *Fo i san-ch'e-huan ching*, but the historicity of this tradition is questionable. The *Sa-t'an fen-lo-t'i ching* (*T* 265, translator unknown) is a one-fascicle Chinese translation of the chapters on "Devadatta" and the "Apparition of the Jeweled Stūpa," which was completed around the time of Dharmarakṣa. The translation by Dharmarakṣa is a complete text with twenty-seven chapters. However, at an earlier date many of the chapters seem to have circulated independently. The earliest part of the text, the chapter on "Skill in Means" (*upāyakaśālyā*), dates from before the second century c.e. Since images of the Buddha are mentioned in the verses of this chapter, it can probably be dated no earlier than the latter half of the first century c.e.

The standard Chinese translation of the text is the *Miao-fa lien-hua ching* (*T* 262) by Kumārajīva, which was finished in 405 or 406. Kumārajīva's translation was not quite complete because it did not include the "Chapter on Devadatta," the verses from the "Chapter on Avalokiteśvara," and half of the "Chapter on Bhaiṣajyarāja (Medicine King) Bodhisattva." Around 490 Fa-hsien obtained the Sanskrit text of the "Chapter on Devadatta" in Kao-ch'ang (in Turfan) and brought it back to China, where he translated it together with Fa-i. However, their translation was not used in the commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra* by Fa-yün (476–529, *T* 1715) or by Shōtoku Taishi (574–622, *T* 2187). Thus, the translation of the "Chapter on Devadatta" must have been added to the *Lotus Sūtra* after their time. Chih-i (538–597) commented on the "Chapter on Devadatta" in his *Fa-hua wen-chü* (*T* 34:114c), but explained that the chapter was not included in the Kumārajīva translation. In 601 the missing sections of the Kumārajīva translation were translated by Jñānagupta and others to produce a more complete text entitled *T'ien-p' in miao-fa lien-hua ching* (*T* 264). The modern version of Kumārajīva's translation includes the "Chapter on Devadatta" and many, but not all, of the missing parts translated later and thus differs from Kumārajīva's original translation.

People over a wide area of Asia believed in the *Lotus Sūtra*. A complete Tibetan translation of the text exists, and Sanskrit manuscripts of it have been discovered in various places in Asia. Particularly important are the Sanskrit manuscripts from Nepal, Gilgit in northern India, and Kashgar and Khādalik in Central Asia. The Nepalese manuscript was published by H. Kern and B. Nanjio. Since then, other manuscripts of the *Lotus Sūtra* have also been published. Modern translations into English and Japanese have also appeared.<sup>6</sup> Passages in the *Lotus* and *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* stated that copying, preserving, reading, preaching, and honoring these texts would result in great merit. Thus, many

of the copies of these texts that were made to produce merit have survived and been discovered in recent times.

The term "*saddharma*" in the title of the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*) means "true teaching." The true teaching is compared to a white lotus (*puṇḍarīka*), which grows in mud but is not defiled by impurities. The *sūtra* was composed to explain the true teaching (namely, the pure nature of the mind).

Passages in the "Introduction" and in the *sūtra* from the chapter on "Parables" (chap. 3) onward often refer to the *Lotus Sūtra*. Such mentions of the *Lotus Sūtra* within the text of the *sūtra* itself refer to the chapter on "Expedient Devices" (chap. 2), the oldest part of the text. This chapter concerns the teaching of the One Buddha-vehicle, a doctrine that leads even *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* to develop the knowledge and insight of a Buddha. *Śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* gain confidence that they can attain Buddhahood when they discover that they have the Buddha-nature. Although no term exactly corresponding to Buddha-nature appears in the *Lotus Sūtra*, the basic concept is contained in this passage: "The original nature (*prakṛti*) of *dharma*s is forever pure (*prabhāsvara*)" (v. 102 from the Sanskrit of the chapter on "Expedient Devices"). This teaching has the same meaning as the doctrine found in the perfection of wisdom literature that the mind is innately pure. This doctrine later developed into Tathāgatagarbha teachings and the view that all sentient beings possessed the Buddha-nature.

The term "*saddharma*" in the *sūtra*'s title refers to the teachings that explain the three vehicles in such a way that the One-vehicle is revealed as the ultimate message of Buddhism (Ch. *k'ai-san hsien-i*). In terms of principles, this teaching is based on the true aspect of all *dharma*s (*dharma-tā*), that all *dharma*s are innately pure, even though the purity of *dharma*s (or of the mind) is obscured in the ordinary person by defilements. In subjective terms, the *sūtra* is based on the practicing bodhisattva's awareness of his own Buddha-nature. In the *sūtra*, this original purity is compared to a white lotus growing in a muddy pond.

In the chapters following "Parables," to prove that even *śrāvakas* possess the true Dharma, the Buddha makes predictions (*vyākaraṇa*) that *śrāvakas* such as Śāriputra will realize Buddhahood in the future. Although the followers of each of the three vehicles—*śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and bodhisattvas—all perform the different practices of their respective vehicle, they make equal progress on the path to Buddhahood. According to the "Expedient Devices" chapter, "There is only one vehicle, not two or three" (T 9:8a). (In contrast, according to the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, the followers of the *śrāvaka*-vehicle are disparaged as having "rotten" or inferior seeds and are said to have no possibility of

realizing Buddhahood. However, if *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* cannot realize ultimate salvation, then the teaching of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* cannot be called a complete version of Mahāyāna, since some beings are not included within the scope of the Buddha's compassion.)

The One-vehicle teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* probably arose out of the need to formulate a teaching that would account for the salvation of Hīnayāna practitioners. In historical terms, after a period of emphasizing the opposition of and differences between the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna traditions, Mahāyāna thinkers formulated new teachings such as those of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which would encompass the two traditions. The appeal of such teachings was based on the popularity of *stūpa* worship, as is clear in the chapter on the "Apparition of the Jeweled *Stūpa*" (*stūpasamdarśana*).

In East Asia the *Lotus Sūtra* has often been interpreted by dividing it into two major parts. The first half of the *sūtra*, particularly the chapter on "Expedient Devices," is called the "section on manifestation" (Ch. *chi-men*). The second half of the *sūtra*, particularly the chapter on "The Lifespan of the Thus Gone One" (*tathāgatayuspramāṇa*), is called the "fundamental section" (Ch. *pen-men*). The chapter on "The Lifespan of the Thus Gone One" is said to contain teachings that "explain the manifestations and reveal the original Buddha" (Ch. *k'ai-chi hsien-pen*). The revelation that Śākyamuni actually realized enlightenment eons ago is said to corroborate the teaching in the chapter on "Expedient Devices" that the Buddha-nature is eternal (Ch. *Fo-hsing chang-chu*). The figure of Śākyamuni as a man who realized enlightenment at Buddhagayā and died at eighty years of age is revealed to be nothing more than an expedient device to encourage sentient beings to practice Buddhism. He is merely a manifestation of the eternal Buddha.

The *Lotus Sūtra* is divided into twenty-eight chapters. The twenty chapters preceding the chapter on "The Supernatural Powers of the Thus Gone One" (*tathāgataṛddhyabhisamkāra*) constitute the earlier part of the text. These twenty chapters can also be divided into earlier and later strata, suggesting that the text we have today is the result of a complex process of compilation. All but the last six of the twenty-eight chapters include verses that repeat the contents of the prose portions of the text. The verses are written in Prakrit and appear to be earlier than the prose. In the last six chapters, the chapter on "The Universal Gate of Avalokiteśvara" (*samantamukhaparivarto namāvalokiteśvaravikurvaṇanirdeśaḥ*) is noteworthy because it describes the multitudinous ways Avalokiteśvara saves sentient beings.

A number of scriptures associated with the *Lotus Sūtra* exist. The *Wuliang-i ching* (*T 276*) is called the "opening *sūtra*" (Ch. *k'ai-ching*) for the

*Lotus Sūtra* in East Asia because lectures on the *Lotus Sūtra* were often preceded by a talk on the *Wu-liang-i ching*. The text contains the famous statement by the Buddha that in more than forty years of preaching, he had not yet revealed the ultimate teaching (which was to be explained in the *Lotus Sūtra*, T9:386b).

The *Kuan p'u-hsien p'u-sa hsing-fa ching* (T 277) is regarded as the "capping sūtra" (Ch. *chieh-ching*) for the *Lotus Sūtra* in East Asia because the bodhisattva Samantabhadra plays a key role in both it and the last chapter of the *Lotus*. Lectures on the *Lotus Sūtra* were often concluded with a talk on that sūtra. A confession ceremony included in the *Kuan p'u-hsien p'u-sa hsing-fa ching* has been influential in East Asia.

The *Ta fa-ku ching* (T 270, *Mahābherihārakaparivarta*§) was influenced by the theme of the harmonization of the three vehicles presented in the *Lotus Sūtra*. This work further develops a number of topics presented in the *Lotus Sūtra*, especially the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine. Discussions of the One-vehicle and the universality of the Buddha-nature are also included.

### The Pure Land Sūtras

In the East Asian Pure Land tradition, the following three sūtras are particularly important: *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360, "Larger" *Sukhāvati-vyūha*\*), *A-mi-t'o ching* (T 366, "Smaller" *Sukhāvati[amṛta]vyūha*), and *Kuan wu-liang-shou-fo ching* (T 365). Modern scholars believe that the *Kuan wu-liang-shou-fo ching* was composed in either China or Central Asia. However, even though the sūtra may not have been composed in India, the contents reflect Indian views.

The earliest extant Chinese translation of the "Larger" *Sukhāvati-vyūha* is the *Ta a-mi-t'o ching* (T 362) translated by Chih Ch'ien sometime between 223 and 253. Later, the sūtra was repeatedly translated. East Asian Buddhists traditionally have claimed that it was translated into Chinese a total of twelve times; however only five of these translations have survived (T nos. 310.5, 360-363). In addition, a Tibetan translation of the sūtra exists and Sanskrit versions have been published.<sup>7</sup>

According to one of the Chinese translations, the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, the bodhisattva Dharmākara made forty-eight vows that were fulfilled when he later attained Buddhahood and became Amitābha Buddha. However, in other translations of the sūtra (T 361 and T 362) the number of vows is only twenty-four. Additional variations in the contents and number of vows can be found in the latest Chinese translation (T 363), the Tibetan translation, and the Sanskrit version of the sūtra. A

comparison of the various translations of the text reveals how the contents of the vows changed from the earliest versions to the later ones. A survey of changes in the numbers and contents of the vows indicates that the "Smaller" *Sukhāvativyūha* was not compiled very long before the version of the "Larger" *Sukhāvativyūha* that Chih Ch'ien used for his translation.

Besides the "Larger" *Sukhāvativyūha*, Lokakṣema translated the *Bhadrāpālasūtra* (also known as the *Pratyutpannasamādhisūtra*, *Pan-chou san-mei ching*, T 418). This *sūtra* contains a description of a meditation through which a person can visualize Amitābha Buddha in front of him. Thus, belief in Amitābha must have been established before the *Bhadrāpālasūtra* was composed. In addition, many of the *sūtras* translated by Chih Ch'ien (T nos. 532, 533, 559, 632, and 1011) contain passages on Amitābha. The frequent mention of Amitābha in a variety of *sūtras* and the numbers of bodhisattvas who are identified with the past lives of Amitābha (some fifteen,<sup>8</sup> including monks, princes, and world-ruling kings) indicate that belief in Amitābha did not originate with the composition of the *Sukhāvativyūha*.

From among the many stories concerning the past lives of Amitābha Buddha, the story of the bodhisattva Dharmākara is the most important. However, Dharmākara and Amitābha do not seem to have been identified with each other at first. Moreover, the stories of Amitābha's past lives as various bodhisattvas do not seem to be related to each other according to recent research by the Japanese scholar Fujita Kōtatsu. Since the names of many of these bodhisattvas appear in the early translations by Chih Ch'ien and Dharmarakṣa, the stories of these bodhisattvas are probably as early as those about Dharmākara. Consequently, Dharmākara and Amitābha do not appear to have been closely linked to each other at first. In fact, legends about Amitābha antedate the appearance of the stories of Dharmākara. The names Amitābha (Unlimited Light) and Amitāyus (Unlimited Life) by themselves originally do not seem to have had any clear Buddhist content. But once the story of Dharmākara's vows was added to the story of Amitābha, then belief in Amitābha was influenced by Mahāyāna ideals of the Buddha's compassion. Moreover, the element "*ākara*" (treasury) in the name Dharmākara is used in Tathāgatagarbha thought and thus helps locate belief in Amitābha within the Mahāyāna tradition.<sup>9</sup>

The *Pan-chou san-mei ching* (T 416-419, *Bhadrāpālasūtra*) also concerns Amitābha Buddha, but in the context of the meditative exercises in which the practitioner visualized the Buddha. It thus has no direct connection with Dharmākara's vows. In this *sūtra* Amitābha Buddha is significant as a Buddha of Unlimited Light or Life who is taken as the

object of a visualization exercise. The two conceptions of Amitābha—Amitābha as an object of a visualization meditation (in the *Bhadrāpālasūtra*) and Amitābha as the embodiment of compassion (in the “Larger” *Sukhāvatīvyūha*)—were finally combined in the *Kuan wu-liang-shou-fo ching* (T 365). Most modern scholars believe that this *sūtra* was compiled in either China or Central Asia.<sup>10</sup> However, the story of King Ajātaśatru and his mother Vaidehi appears in early sources such as the *Wei-sheng-yüan ching* (T 507), translated by Chih Ch’ien. Moreover, meditations on a special land where a person may be reborn through pure actions (Ch. *ch’ing-ching yeh-ch’u*) has its roots in early Buddhist traditions.<sup>11</sup>

The *A-mi-t’o ching* (T 366, “Smaller” *Sukhāvatīvyūha*) is composed of descriptions of the adornments of the Western Paradise and praises for Amitābha’s achievements by the Buddhas of the six directions. Its contents are simpler than the descriptions of visualizations of the Buddhas or the vows of Dharmākara. But it is tied to the “Larger” *Sukhāvatīvyūha* by the statement that ten eons have passed since Amitābha became a Buddha. The statement from the “Smaller” *Sukhāvatīvyūha* may have been incorporated into the “Larger” *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. Although this statement by itself does not provide sufficient evidence to determine the order in which the two *sūtras* were composed, the evidence strongly suggests that the “Smaller” *Sukhāvatīvyūha* is the older text.

The most important *sūtras* concerning Amitābha have been surveyed above, but many other Mahāyāna scriptures contain references to Amitābha. Since Amitābha is mentioned in the *Pan-chou san-mei ching* (T 418, *Bhadrāpālasūtra*), translated by Lokakṣema in 179, belief in Amitābha was undoubtedly evident in northern India in the first century C.E. It is unclear, however, whether the compilation of the oldest extant version of the “Larger” *Sukhāvatīvyūha* (T 362) can be dated as early as this.

Both the names “Amitābha” (Unlimited Light) and “Amitāyus” (Unlimited Life) are used to refer to the Buddha who presides over the Western Paradise. The light emanating from Amitābha Buddha is described in detail in two of the Chinese translations of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, the *Ta a-mi-t’o ching* (T 362, 12:302b-303b, 309a) and the *P’ing-teng-chüeh ching* (T 361, 12:281c-286b). According to the *Ta a-mi-t’o ching*, the lifespan of Amitābha is, in fact, limited. After Amitābha enters *nirvāṇa*, he will be succeeded by the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Ch. Kai-lou-hsuang p’u-sa). In addition, many other aspects of the *Ta a-mi-t’o ching* have not been systematized, indicating that this text is a very early version of the “Larger” *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. In contrast, according to the *P’ing-teng-chüeh ching*, Amitābha will not enter *nirvāṇa* (T 12:290b). In the vows of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* translation (T 360),

Amitābha's unlimited life is emphasized much more than his unlimited light.

According to the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, the bodhisattva Dharmākara made his primordial vows (*pūva praṇidhāna*) after five eons of contemplation. (The vows are called "primordial" in the sense that they were made in the past before Amitābha had attained Buddhahood.) After eons of practice, his vows were fulfilled and he became Amitābha Buddha and established the Western Paradise. He welcomes all who wish to be reborn in his Pure Land and thereby saves them. Rigorous practice is not required of those who wish to be reborn in the Pure Land. They need only have faith (*śraddhā*) in Amitābha's primordial vows and recite his name (*nāmadheya*). Even a bodhisattva with inferior faculties and without the strength to observe the precepts or meditate can quickly attain a stage of spiritual progress from which he will not backslide by relying upon Amitābha's vows. Consequently, belief in Amitābha was called a path of easy practice (Ch. *i-hsing-tao*).

The path of easy practice is based on the teaching that salvation can be attained through faith (P. *saddhā-vimutti*).<sup>12</sup> Faith and doubt are opposed to each other. As faith deepens, doubts about the validity of the teachings is vanquished. Even if a practitioner with deep faith wished to doubt Buddhist teachings, he would be unable to do so. Thus even at the beginning of practice, the mind can be freed of doubts and an elementary form of salvation realized through the functioning of faith. And since neither the vigorous practice of religious austerities nor the understanding of difficult doctrines is required to attain salvation through faith, even a person of dull intellect or a person who is submissive and sincere can attain salvation through faith. Of course, salvation through faith is not complete salvation. Later, the practitioner is expected to realize such stages as salvation through wisdom (P. *paññā-vimutti*), salvation through both wisdom and meditation (P. *ubhatobhāga-vimutti*), and salvation of the mind (P. *cetovimutti*).

The term "salvation through faith" is used in this sense in the *Āgamas*. The term also has a long history in Theravāda Buddhism and appears in such works as Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* (Path of Purification). The term "*saddhā-vimutti*" is not found in Sarvāstivādin works, but similar terms such as "*śraddhā-adhimukti*" were used in the Sarvāstivādin School. In Mahāyāna Buddhism terms such as "salvation through faith" do not seem to have been used. According to some Mahāyāna texts, while faith will not lead to salvation, it will lead to the stage of nonretrogression (*avivartika*, *avaivartika*). According to the *Shih-chu p'i-p'o-sha lun* (T 26:41b, *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā*?) attributed to Nāgārjuna, "Some people practice with strict austerities; others use the expe-

dient of faith as an easy practice to progress rapidly to the stage of non-retrogression." Thus the importance of faith is noted in a number of Mahāyāna texts. According to the *Hua-yen ching* (T 9:433a, *Avatamsaka*), "Faith is the foundation of the path and the mother of merits. All good *dharma*s are increased through it." The *Ta-chih-tu lun* (T 25:63a, *Mahā-prajñāpāramitopadeśa*) states that "the great ocean of the Buddha's teaching may be entered through faith and crossed by wisdom."

Faith in Amitābha Buddha drew upon older teachings that were an established part of Buddhism. Some modern scholars have argued that faith in Amitābha Buddha was established in response to the *Bhagavad-gītā*'s concept of *bhakti* (devotion). Although faith in Amitābha has elements in common with devotion to Kṛṣṇa, the term "*bhakti*" does not appear in the *Sukhāvativyūha*.

Indian scriptures concerning Amitābha seem to have been composed by people different from those who compiled the perfection of wisdom literature. Belief in Amitābha was widespread among Mahāyāna Buddhists. References to Amitābha and his Pure Land (*Sukhāvati*) are found in many Mahāyāna scriptures, and rebirth in Pure Land is recommended as goal in many of these works. According to the Japanese scholar Fujita Kōtatsu, Amitābha Buddha is referred to in more than one-third of the translations of Indian Mahāyāna scriptures in the Chinese canon, a total of more than 270 *sūtras* and *śāstras*. Many of Amitābha's vows are cited in the *Pei hua ching* (T 157, *Karunāpūṇḍarikasūtra*\*), indicating that this text was closely connected to the *Sukhāvativyūha*. The Sanskrit text of the *Karunāpūṇḍarikasūtra* has been published.<sup>13</sup>

Several other figures besides Amitābha should be mentioned in connection with Pure Land thought. As was discussed earlier, Akṣobhya Buddha and his Pure Land, Abhirati, are described in the perfection of wisdom *sūtras*. Belief in Akṣobhya, however, was never as popular as faith in Amitābha.

Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven was sometimes regarded as a Pure Land. Maitreya is mentioned as the future Buddha in the *Āgamas*, where he is considered to be a bodhisattva who will attain Buddhahood in his next life (*eka-jāti-pratibaddha*). Having already completed the austerities necessary to attain Buddhahood, he waits in Tuṣita Heaven for the appropriate time for his rebirth in this world where he will attain enlightenment under a *pumṇāga* tree and preach three times in order to save sentient beings. Later belief in Maitreya changed dramatically. In the *Kuan mi-le p'u-sa shang-sheng tou-shuai-t'ien ching* (T 452), the adornments of Tuṣita Heaven and the way in which a person can be reborn there are described. The belief in rebirth in Tuṣita Heaven was particularly influential in China and Japan. The Sanskrit text of the *Maitreyavyākaraṇa* has been published.<sup>14</sup>



### Scriptures Concerning Mañjuśrī

Along with Maitreya, Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta was a very important and honored bodhisattva. Both figures appear in very early Mahāyāna texts. For example, Maitreya and Mañjuśrī are both mentioned in Lokakṣema's Chinese translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-PP*, completed in 179 C.E. (T 224), indicating that Mañjuśrī was clearly known by the first century C.E.

Mañjuśrī is generally thought of as manifesting the wisdom that results from enlightenment and is therefore closely associated with perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) literature. Since, however, he does not appear in either the *Ta pan-jo ching* (T 223, *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-PP\**) or the *Chin-kang pan-jo ching* (T 235, *Vajracchedikā\**), it appears that originally he was not closely tied to *prajñāpāramitā* literature; rather, literature about him may have initially been composed by people who were not concerned with *prajñāpāramitā* teachings. (*Prajñāpāramitā* texts in which Mañjuśrī plays a central role, such as T 232-233, the *Saptaśatikā-PP\**, were compiled later.) Mañjuśrī also does not appear in such early Mahāyāna sūtras as the *A-ch'u fo-kuo ching* (T 313, *Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūha\**), *Pan-chou san-mei ching* (T 417-418, *Bhadrāpālasūtra*), and *Ta a-mi-to ching* (T 362, *Sukhāvatīvyūha\**). Eight great lay bodhisattvas led by Bhadrāpāla are central figures in the *Pan-chou san-mei ching*.

Mañjuśrī plays a key role in the *Shou-leng-yen san-mei ching* (T 642, *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra*). According to this text, from time immemorial Mañjuśrī has practiced under countless Buddhas and has already completed the practices necessary to attain Buddhahood. In the past, he was known as the Buddha Lung-chung-shang (Sanskrit unknown). Passages in the first chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* (T 262) and in Lokakṣema's Chinese translation of the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana* (T 626) state that Mañjuśrī has been a great bodhisattva since long ago. Such passages indicate that Mañjuśrī was a noteworthy figure from early in Mahāyāna Buddhism. According to the *Fang-po ching* (T 629), a partial translation of the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana*, Mañjuśrī has been practicing from long ago. When Śākyamuni was a child in one of his past lives, he was introduced by Mañjuśrī to a Buddha and then went on to attain enlightenment. Thus Śākyamuni's attainment of Buddhahood is due to Mañjuśrī's help. Moreover, Mañjuśrī has helped not only Śākyamuni, but all Buddhas, and is therefore said to be "the father and mother of those on the path to Buddhahood" (T 15:451a).

Mañjuśrī is an advanced bodhisattva who realized the stage of nonretrogression many eons ago. He is also the personification of wisdom. Since Mañjuśrī is often associated with teachings concerning the innate wisdom that all people possess, he can also be viewed as a personifica-

tion of the practices that will lead to the development and realization of that wisdom. The *A-she-shih-wang ching* (T 626, *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana*§) contains a detailed presentation of the teaching that the mind is originally pure. Mañjuśrī is called a "chaste youth" (*kumārabhūta*) and a "Prince of the Dharma." Yet he has the power to guide Buddhas. He has not yet realized Buddhahood, suggesting that he is forever advancing in his practice. Mañjuśrī's activities can be understood as representing the process of uncovering the originally pure nature of the mind, which has been obscured by adventitious defilements.

According to the *A-she-shih-wang ching* (T 15:389a), Mañjuśrī and twenty-five other bodhisattvas lived and practiced on a mountain. In the *Gaṇḍavyūha* chapter of the *Avatamsaka*, Mañjuśrī is said to have left Śākyamuni at Śrāvastī and traveled south to the city of Dhanyākara, where he lived in a large *stūpa* hall (*mahācaitya*) in a grove of *sāla* trees (*mahādhvaja-vyūha-sāla-vanaṣaṇḍa*). There he gathered many believers around him. Such passages suggest the probable existence of an order of monastic bodhisattvas that honored and believed in Mañjuśrī. In addition, according to the *Ta-chih-tu lun* (T 25:756b, *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*), Maitreya and Mañjuśrī led Ānanda to the outside ring of iron mountains surrounding the world, where they convened a council on Mahāyāna scriptures. Passages like this one indicate that Mañjuśrī and Maitreya were considered to be particularly important bodhisattvas. In the *Wen-shu-shih-li fo-t'u yen-ching ching* (T 318, *Mañjuśrībuddhakṣetragaṇa-vyūhasūtra*§), translated by Dharmarakṣa in 290, ten great vows made by Mañjuśrī are described. Through these ten vows Mañjuśrī purified and adorned a Buddha-land. Mañjuśrī's vows are reflected in the practices of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra. According to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the youth Sudhana was urged by Mañjuśrī to go on a journey in search of the Dharma. Through the practices recommended by Samantabhadra, Sudhana finally realized enlightenment. Thus the religious practices associated with Samantabhadra are said to be based upon the wisdom of Mañjuśrī.

Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana* is entitled *Wen-shu-shih-li p'u-ch'ao san-mei ching* (T 627) and thus includes Mañjuśrī's name (Wen-shu-shih-li) in the title. Mañjuśrī's name appears in the titles of many other *sūtras* translated into Chinese by a variety of people including Lokakṣema, Dharmarakṣa, Kumārajīva, and Nieh Tao-chen (see T nos. 318, 458-461, 463-464). In addition, Mañjuśrī plays a major role in many *sūtras* even if his name does not appear in the title. For example, in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, Mañjuśrī leads the group of bodhisattvas and *śrāvakas* that visit Vimalakīrti, who is lying ill in bed. In the *sūtra*, Mañjuśrī is clearly the head of the bodhisattvas and superior to Maitreya.

In conclusion, the perfection of wisdom *sūtras* and Amitābha worship were important types of early Mahāyāna Buddhism. However, teachings concerning Mañjuśrī also represented an important tradition within Mahāyāna. Further investigation into the significance of Mañjuśrī would contribute significantly to our understanding of the origins of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

### Miscellaneous Other Mahāyāna Scriptures

Many Mahāyāna scriptures were composed before Nāgārjuna's time. Besides those texts discussed above, a number of early works belonging to the *Pao-chi ching* (T 310, *Ratnakūṭa*) and the *Ta-fang-teng ta-chi-ching* (T 397, *Mahāsaṃnipātasūtra*?) date from this time. Bodhiruci's Chinese translation of the *Ratnakūṭa* is 120 fascicles in length and divided into forty-nine assemblies. The Tibetan translation is organized in a similar manner. The Tibetan translation does not represent a direct transmission from India, however, but has been influenced and supplemented by referring to the Chinese translation.

The individual works within the *Ratnakūṭa* originally circulated as independent texts and were later collected into the *Ratnakūṭa* in India or Central Asia. A Sanskrit version of the collection must have existed at one time, since the Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang is said to have brought it to China. After translating the huge 600-fascicle *Ta pan-jo po-lo-mi-to ching* (T 220, *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*?), Hsüan-tsang was able to translate only one part of the *Ratnakūṭa*, the 20-fascicle *Ta p'u-sa tsang-ching* (T no. 310.12, *Bodhisattvapīṭaka*#), before he died. Bodhiruci translated the rest of the Sanskrit text later, between 707 and 713. His translation constitutes the text of the extant *Ratnakūṭa*. In compiling the translation, Bodhiruci incorporated previous Chinese translations of sections of the *Ratnakūṭa* that apparently were based on the same text as the Sanskrit manuscripts he was using. When the Sanskrit text seemed to be more complete than the Chinese, he would supplement the older Chinese translation (*K'ai-yüan shih-chiao lu*, T 55:570b).

The *Ratnakūṭa* includes a variety of materials without any clear principle of organization. For example, the forty-sixth assembly, in which Mañjuśrī preaches perfection of wisdom (T 310.46, *Saptaśatikā-PP*#), was also included in the *Ta pan-jo po-lo-mi-to ching* (see T no. 220.7, *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*?). The forty-seventh assembly, *Pao-chi p'u-sa hui* (T no. 310.47, *Ratnacūḍaparipṛcchā*#), is also found in the *Mahāsaṃnipātasūtra* (T no. 397.11). The existence of a Sanskrit text of the *Ratnakūṭa* at one time is indicated by citations of it in the *Prasannapadā* and the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*. It is not clear, however, whether the Sanskrit text was of the

same size as the Chinese translation. A large number of Sanskrit texts connected with the *Ratnakūṭa* have been discovered and published, among them the *Kāśyapaaparivarta*.<sup>15</sup>

The Chinese translation of the *Mahāsaṃnipātasūtra*, the *Ta-fang-teng ta-chi-ching* (T 397), was done by Dharmakṣema and others. Later, translations by Narendrayaśas were added; it was edited into its present form by the Sui dynasty monk Seng-chiu (fl. 586–594). It is a sixty-fascicle work divided into seventeen chapters (*K'ai-yüan shih-chiao lu*, T 55: 588b). Older versions of the Chinese translation apparently were only about thirty fascicles long. At least one of the works in the Tibetan canon has the term “great collection” (Tib. *hdus-pa-chen-po*) preceding its title, suggesting a possible connection with the *Ta-fang-teng ta-chi-ching*, but further investigation reveals little in common. The *Ta-fang-teng ta-chi-ching* includes lists of *dharma*s, discussions of the characteristics of *dharma*s, and expositions of the doctrine that the mind is innately pure. In addition, many Esoteric Buddhist elements are found in it including *dhāraṇī* and astrology. Only a few Sanskrit fragments of *sūtra*s in this collection have been found. However, the discovery at Gilgit of a manuscript of the *Mahāsaṃnipāta ratnaketu dhāraṇī sūtra* should be noted. The manuscript has since been published by Nalinaksha Dutt.<sup>16</sup>

Many other early Mahāyāna *sūtra*s exist besides those mentioned above. Among those with extant Sanskrit versions are the *Śālistambasūtra* (T 278–279, 710–711), which concerns Dependent Origination; *Samādhirājasūtra* (T 639–641); *Bhaiṣajyagurusūtra*; and *Suvarṇaprabhāṣottamasūtra* (T 663–665).<sup>17</sup>

### Sanskrit Texts

Because of the disappearance of Buddhism from India, a complete Mahāyāna canon in Sanskrit does not exist. However, Sanskrit Mahāyāna texts have been found in a number of areas and are gradually being published. More have been discovered in Nepal than anywhere else. Particularly famous as Sanskrit Mahāyāna texts from Nepal are the following group known as the “Nine Dharma Jewels”: *Lalitavistara*, *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*, *Daśabhūmika*, *Gaṇḍavyūha*, *Laṅkāvatāra*, *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, *Samādhirāja*, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, and *Tathāgataguhyaka*. Many Esoteric Buddhist texts in Sanskrit have also been found. Today Nepalese manuscripts are preserved in England, France, Japan, and Calcutta.

Around the end of the nineteenth century, a number of expeditions to Central Asia discovered many Sanskrit manuscripts in the desert. The

expeditions of such men as Aurel Stein, Paul Pelliot, Albert von Le Coq, and the Ōtani expedition brought Sanskrit texts back to Europe and Japan. The German expedition carried a great many manuscripts back to Berlin. The study of the manuscripts began in this century and gradually some have been published. Publishing information can be found in Yamada Ryūjō's *Bongo Butten no shobunken*.<sup>18</sup>

In 1931 a large number of Buddhist texts were discovered in an old *stūpa* at Gilgit in Kashmir. Among them was an almost complete version of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinaya*, as well as many Mahāyāna texts. Some of these have been published by Nalinaksha Dutt in *Gilgit Manuscripts*. Raghu Vira and his successor, Lokesh Chandra, have also published part of the *Śāta-piṭaka*.

During the 1930s Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana traveled to Tibet, where he found many Sanskrit manuscripts of Buddhist texts in monasteries. Photographs of the texts are preserved at the Jayaswal Research Institute in Patna. The texts are gradually being published in the Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series. The contents of most of these manuscripts have not yet been sufficiently studied; however, a large proportion of the Mahāyāna texts appear to be concerned with Esoteric Buddhism. Also included are treatises on *abhidharma* and Mahāyāna Buddhism, as well as works on Buddhist logic.

The largest set of Sanskrit Mahāyāna texts is the series entitled Buddhist Sanskrit Texts published by the Mithila Institute. Almost all of the Sanskrit texts of Mahāyāna works discovered in Nepal, Tibet, Gilgit, and other areas are included in it. Important Sanskrit texts have also been published by the Italian scholar Giuseppe Tucci in the Series *Orienteale Roma*.